

Joseph Wright

EDUC 6000

Dr. Brian Ludlow

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Week 1 – Assignment #3: Characteristics of High-Quality Assessment

Write a one page reflection (approximately 350-500 words) explaining the eight characteristics of high quality assessments suggested by McMillan. Offer suggestions regarding what teachers can do to ensure that their own classroom assessments are of high quality.

According to McMillan, there are eight different criteria that will ensure high-quality classroom assessments:

- Clear and appropriate learning targets
- Alignment of assessment methods and learning targets
- Validity
- Reliability / Precision
- Fairness
- Positive Consequences
- Alignment (with Standards)
- Practicality & Efficiency (p. 73, 2018)

I'd like to reflect on these, and consider what I do and could do better to make sure each of these is addressed in my own classroom.

First, we need to make sure that our classes have “**clear and appropriate learning targets**” (p. 73). This past year, our admins have made a concerted effort to ensure that we are doing exactly this, every single day, in our own classes. We have also been tasked with creating

and following a detailed scope and sequence for each of our classes. As a charter school, we are not part of a larger district, thus we are not subject to what may be interpreted as “Royal Decree from His Excellent Superintendency” regarding what curriculum we teach, the standards and learning targets we have, or the timeframe for such. Many regular school districts do however have such a top-down approach. The downside of course to our model is that letting each teacher (hardly any teacher teaches the same class as another) has been left to their own devices, and this has resulted in some issues of accountability, and so we are working to correct that, hence our summer assignment.

This has been a problem, because **alignment with standards** as well as **assessment** and **learning targets** is an issue when each teacher is “an island unto themselves”; state standards in some cases have been ignored (not by me, although I have admittedly skirted some before now). This latest mandate from our administration has been helpful to all of us teachers, including me to recognize what areas I am personally lacking in, especially in regards to High-Quality Assessment. As we consider our **state standards**, and work to **align** our classes to that and so our **learning targets** reflect those as well, then the groundwork is laid for the other factors re: high-quality assessment. In at least one class, I have nearly finished with this alignment. As I’ve considered the reading and material I am learning in this class, I realize I have room for improvement with some of these other criterions.

I have already created a number of **practical and efficient** formal, summative assessments, which consider the limited class time we have to engage in formal assessment and instruction. I’ve taken steps to ensure they are **fair** and free of biases, including utilizing oral assessment instead of essay questions for those that would prefer. However, I realize that, while I have engaged in **informal criterion-related evidence** through informal and formal means, and

worked to make sure my tests are **validly** testing the **learning outcomes**, i.e., when I created the tests, I tried to use questions that ensured that what is assessed is consistent with what is taught (p. 84), I realize that I can still do a better job of making sure each of my learning outcomes / targets is reflected by at least a question or two on the assessment.

This will make sure my assessment methods are more valid. Currently, my assessments seem to do pretty well with regards to **reliability**, but if I make these changes, I think that the **positive consequences** of both my formal and informal assessments will be vastly improved. By considering all of these criterion, including alignment across the board, from standards, to learning targets, to assessments, will help me and other teachers improve our assessment and the learning that is occurring in my classes. Thanks for giving me the incentive to improve!

Sources:

McMillan, J. H. (2018). *Classroom assessment: Principles and practice that enhance student learning and motivation* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.